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THE SKATER'S

POCKET COMPANION.

Chas. P. Otis
1859

THE

SKATER'S POCKET COMPANION,

A COMPLETE

MANUAL OF THE ART;

WITH

8009.66

HINTS TO LEARNERS, RULES FOR FORMING CLUBS, A FULL AND COMPLETE DESCRIPTION OF THE APPARATUS FOR SAVING LIFE USED BY THE SKATER'S CLUB OF PHILADELPHIA, ETC., ETC.

Illustrated.

BOSTON:
MAYHEW AND BAKER,
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SKATING.

SKATING is the art of balancing the body, while, by the impulse of each foot alternately, it moves rapidly upon the ice.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE SKATE.

The wood of the skate should be slightly hollowed, so as to adapt it to the ball of the foot; and, as the heel of the boot must be thick enough to admit the peg, it may be well to lower the wood of the skate corresponding to the heel, so as to permit the foot to regain that degree of horizontal position, which it would otherwise lose by the height of the heel; for the more of the foot that is in contact with the skate, the more firmly will these be attached. As the tread of the skate should correspond, as nearly as possible, with that of the foot, the wood should be of the same length as the boot or shoe; the irons of good steel, and well secured in the wood.

These should pass beyond the screw at the heel, nearly as far as the wood itself; but the bow of the iron should not project much beyond the tread.

If the skate project much beyond the wood, the whole foot, and more especially its hind part, must be raised considerably from the ice when the front or bow of the skate is brought to bear upon it; and, as the skater depends upon this part for the power of his stroke, it is evident that that must be greatly diminished by the general distance of the foot from the ice. In short, if the skate be too long, the stroke will be feeble, and the back of the leg painfully cramped; if it be too short, the footing will be proportionally unsteady and tottering.

As the position of the person in the act of skating is never vertical, and is sometimes very much inclined, and as considerable exertion of the muscles of the leg is requisite to keep the ankle stiff, this ought to be relieved by the lowness of the skates. Seeing, then, that the closer the foot is to the ice, the less is the strain on the ankle, it is clear that the foot ought to be brought as near to the ice as possible, without danger of bringing the sole of the foot in contact with it, while traversing on the edge of the skate. The best height is about three quarters of an inch, and the iron about a quarter of an inch thick.

The grooved or fluted skate, if ever useful, is of service only to boys, or very light persons, whose weight is not sufficient to catch the ice in a hard frost. It certainly should never be used by a person who is heavier than a boy of thirteen or fourteen years of age usually is, because the sharp edge too easily cuts into the ice, and prevents figuring. Fluted skates, indeed, are even dangerous: for the snow or ice cuttings are apt to collect and consolidate

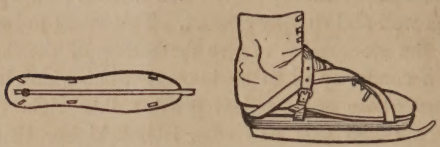
in the grooves, till the skater is raised from the edge of his skate, and thrown.

In the general inclination of the foot in skating, no edge can have greater power than that of a rectangular shape; the tendency of the action is downwards, cutting through rather than sliding on the surface; and greater hold than this is unnecessary. The irons of skates should be kept well and sharply ground. This ought to be done across the stone, so as to give the bottom of the skate so slight a concavity as to be imperceptible, which insures an edge whose angle is not greater than right. Care must be taken that one edge is not higher than the other; so that, when the skate is placed upon an even surface, it may stand quite perpendicularly. The wear of the iron not being great with a beginner, one grinding will generally last him through an ordinary winter's skating on clean ice.

The bottom of the iron should be a little curved; for, if perfectly straight, it would be capable of describing only a straight line, whereas the skater's progress must be circular, because, in order to bring the edge to bear, the body must be inclined, and inclination can be preserved only in circular motion. This curve of the iron should be part of a circle, whose radius is about two feet. That shape enables the skater to turn his toe or heel outwards or inwards with facility.

A screw would have a firmer hold than a mere peg in the hole of the boot; but, as it is less easily removed, skaters generally prefer the peg. The skater should be

careful not to bore a larger hole in the heel than is sufficient to admit the peg. The more simple the fastenings of the skate the better. The two straps — namely, the cross strap over the toe, and the heel strap — cannot be improved, unless perhaps by passing one strap through the three bores, and so making it serve for both.



Before going on the ice, the young skater must learn to tie on the skates, and may also learn to walk with them easily in a room, balancing alternately on each foot.

DRESS OF THE SKATER.

A skater's dress should be as close and unincumbered as possible. Large skirts get entangled with his own limbs, or those of the persons who pass near him; and all fulness of dress is exposed to the wind. Loose trousers, frocks, and more especially great-coats must be avoided; and indeed, by wearing additional under-clothing, they can always be dispensed with.

As the exercise of skating produces perspiration, flannel next the chest, shoulders, and loins, is necessary to avoid the evils produced by sudden chills in cold weather.

The best dress is what is called a dress-coat, buttoned, tight pantaloons, and laced boots (having the heel no higher than is necessary for the peg), which hold the foot tightly and steadily in its place, as well as give the best support to the ankle; for it is of no use to draw the straps of the skate hard, if the boot or shoe be loose.

PRELIMINARY AND GENERAL DIRECTIONS.

Either very rough or very smooth ice should be avoided. The person who for the first time attempts to skate, must not trust to a stick. He may make a friend's hand his support, if he require one; but that should be soon relinquished, in order to balance himself. He will probably scramble about for half an hour or so, till he begins to find out where the edge of his skate is.

The beginner must be fearless, but not violent; nor even in a hurry. He should not let his feet get far apart, and keep his heels still nearer together. He must keep the ankle of the foot on the ice quite firm; not attempting to gain the edge of the skate by bending it, because the right mode of getting to either edge is by the inclination of the whole body in the direction required; and this inclination should be made fearlessly and decisively.

The leg which is on the ice should be kept perfectly straight; for, though the knee must be somewhat bent at the time of striking, it must be straightened as quickly as possible without any jerk. The leg which is off the ice should also be kept straight, though not stiff, having an

easy but slight play, the toe pointing downwards, and the heel within from six to twelve inches of the other.

The learner must not look down at the ice, nor at his feet, to see how they perform. He may at first incline his body a little forward, for safety, but hold his head up, and see where he goes, his person erect, and his face rather elevated than otherwise.

When once off, he must bring both feet up together, and strike again, as soon as he finds himself steady enough, rarely allowing both feet to be on the ice together. The position of the arms should be easy and varied; one being always more raised than the other, this elevation being alternate, and the change corresponding with that of the legs; that is, the right arm being raised as the right leg is put down, and *vice versâ*, so that the arm and leg of the same side may not be raised together.

The face must be always turned in the direction of the line intended to be described. Hence, in backward skating, the head will be inclined much over the shoulder; in forward skating, but slightly. All sudden and violent action must be avoided. Stopping may be caused by slightly bending the knees, drawing the feet together, inclining the body forward, and pressing on the heels. It may also be caused by turning short to the right or left, the foot on the side to which we turn being rather more advanced, and supporting part of the weight.

THE ORDINARY RUN, OR INSIDE EDGE FORWARD.

The first attempt of the beginner is to walk, and this walk shortly becomes a sliding gait, done entirely on the inside edge of the skate.

The first impulse is to be gained by pressing the inside edge of one skate against the ice, and advancing with the

opposite foot. To effect this, the beginner must bring the feet nearly together, turn the left somewhat out, place

the right a little in advance and at right angles with it, lean forward with the right shoulder, and at the same time move the right foot onwards, and press sharply, or strike the ice with the inside edge of the left skate,—care being taken instantly to throw the weight on the right foot. (Fig. 1.) While thus in motion, the skater must bring up the left foot nearly to a level with the other, and may for the present proceed a short way on both feet.

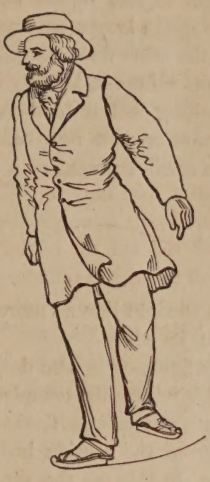
He must next place the left foot in advance in its turn, bring the left shoulder forward, inclining to that side, strike from the inside edge of the right skate, and proceed as before.

Finally, this motion has only to be repeated on each foot alternately, gradually keeping the foot from which he struck longer off the ice, till he has gained sufficient command of himself to keep it off altogether, and is able to strike directly from one to the other, without at any time having them both on the ice together. Having practised this till he has gained some degree of firmness and power, and a command of his balance, he may proceed to

THE FORWARD ROLL, OR OUTSIDE EDGE.

This is commonly reckoned the first step to figure skating, as, when it is once effected, the rest follows with ease. The impulse is gained in the same manner as for the ordinary run; but, to get on the outside edge of the

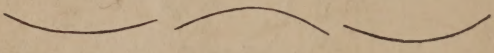
right foot, the moment that foot is in motion, the skater must advance the left shoulder, throw the right arm back, look over the right shoulder, and incline the whole person boldly and decisively on that side, keeping the left foot suspended behind. (Fig. 2.)



As he proceeds, he must bring the left foot past the inside of the right, with a slight jerk, which produces an opposing balance of the body; the right foot must quickly press, first on the outside of the heel, then on the inside, or its toe; the left foot must be placed down in front,

before it is removed more than about eight or ten inches from the other foot; and, by striking outside to the left, giving at the same moment a strong push with the inside of the right toe, the skater passes from right to left, inclining to the left side, in the same manner as he did to the right. He then continues to change from left to right, and from right to left, in the same manner. At first he should not remain long upon one leg, nor scruple occasionally to put the other down to assist; and throughout he must keep himself erect, leaning most on the heel.

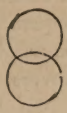
The Dutch travelling roll is done on the outside edge forward, in the manner just represented, except that there is described a small segment of a very large circle, thus:



diverging from the straight line no more than is requisite to keep the skate on its edge.

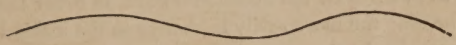
The cross roll or figure 8 is also done on the outside edge forward. This is only the completion of the circle on the outside edge; and it is performed by crossing the legs, and striking from the outside instead of the inside edge. In order to do this, as the skater draws to the close of the stroke on his right leg, he must throw the left quite across it, which will cause him to press hard on the outside of the right skate, from which he must immediately strike, at the same time throwing back the left arm, and looking over the left shoulder, to bring him well upon

the outside of that skate. By completing the circle in this manner on each leg, the 8 is formed:



each circle being small, complete, and well-formed, before the foot is changed.

The Mercury figure is merely the outside and inside forward succeeding each other on the same leg alternately, by which a serpentine line is described, thus:



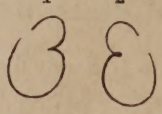
This is skated with the force and rapidity gained by a run. When the run is complete, and the skater on the outside edge, his person becomes quiescent, in the attitude of Mercury, having the right arm advanced and much raised, the face turned over the right shoulder, and the left foot off the ice, a short distance behind the other, turned out and pointed.

FIGURE OF THREE, OR INSIDE EDGE BACKWARDS.

82. This figure is formed by turning from the outside edge forward to the inside edge backward on the same foot. The head of the three is formed like the half circle, on

the heel of the outside edge; but when the half circle is complete, the skater leans suddenly forward, and rests on the same toe inside, and a backward motion, making the tail of the 3, is the consequence. The figure described by the right leg should be nearly in form of No. 1; and on the left leg should be reversed, and resemble No. 2.

1 2



At first, the skater should not throw himself quite so hard as hitherto on the outside forward, in order that he may be able the more easily to change to the inside back. He may also be for some time contented with much less than a semicircle before he turns. Having done this, and brought the left leg nearly up to the other, he must not pass it on in advance, as he would to complete a circle, but throw it off gently sidewise, at the same moment turning the face from the left to the right shoulder, and giving the whole person a slight inclination to the left side. These motions throw the skater upon the inside of his skate; but as the first impulse should still retain most of its force, he continues to move on the inside back, in a direction so little different, that his first impulse loses little by the change. (Fig. 3.)

If unable to change the edge by this method, the sk- may assist himself by slightly and gently swinging the

rm and leg outward, so as to incline the person to a otatory motion. This swing, however, must be corrected s soon as the object is attained; and it must generally e observed that the change from edge to edge is to be ffected merely by the inclination of the body, not by winging.

When the skater is able to join the ends of the 3, so as to form one side of a circle, then, by striking off in the same manner, and completing another 3, with the left leg, the combination of the two 3's will form an 8. In the first attempts, the 3 should not be made above two

feet long, which he will acquire the power of doing almo imperceptibly. He may then gradually extend the si as he advances in the art.

Though, in this section, backward skating is spoken o the term refers to the skate only, which in such cas moves heel foremost, but the person of the skater move sidewise, the face being always turned in the direction i which he is proceeding.

OUTSIDE EDGE BACKWARDS.

Here the skater, having completed the 3, and being carried on by the first impulse, still continues his progress in the same direction, but on the other foot, putting it down on its outside edge, and continuing to go backwards slowly.

To accomplish this, the skater, after making the 3, and placing the outside edge of the left foot on the ice, should at once turn his face over the right shoulder, raise his right foot from the ice, and throw back his right arm and shoulder. (Fig. 4.) If, for awhile, he is unable readily to raise that foot which has made the 3, and leave himself on the outside of the other skate, he may keep both down for some distance, putting himself, however, in attitude of being on the outside only of one skate, and gradually lifting the other off the ice as he acquires ability.

When finishing any figure, this use of both feet backward has great convenience and beauty.

Before venturing on the outside backward, the skater

ought to take care that the ice is clear of stones, reeds, &c., and also be certain of the good quality of his irons. When going with great force backward, the course may be deflected, so as to stop by degrees; and, when moving slowly, the suspended foot may be put down in a cross direction to the path.

Such are the four movements of which alone the skate is capable: namely, the inside edge forward; the outside forward; the inside back; and the outside back; in which has been seen how the impulse for the first two is gained,

and how the third flows from the second, and the fourth from the third. By the combination of these elements of skating, and the variations with which they succeed each other, are formed all the evolutions in this art.

The Double Three is that combination in which the skates are brought from the inside back of the first three, to the outside forward of the second. Here the skater, after having completed one 3, and being on the inside back, must bring the whole of the left side forward, particularly the leg, till it is thrown almost across the right, on which he is skating. This action brings him once more to the outside forward, from which he again turns to the inside back. While he is still in motion on the second inside back of the right leg, he must strike on the left, and repeat the same on that.

It is at first enough to do two 3's perfectly and smoothly. Their number from one impulse may be increased as the skater gains steadiness and skill; the art of accomplishing this being to touch as lightly as possible on each side of the skate successively, so that the first impulse may be preserved and made the most of.

The Back Roll is a means of moving from one foot to another.

Suppose the skater to have put himself on the outside edge back of the left leg, with considerable impulse, by means of the three performed on the right, — not bearing hard on the edge, for the object is to change it, and take up the motion on the right foot, — this is effected by throwing the left arm and shoulder back, and turning the

face to look over them; when, having brought the inside of his left skate to bear on the ice, he must immediately strike from it to the outside back of the other, by pressing it into the ice as forcibly as he can at the toe. Having thus been brought to the backward roll on the right foot, he repeats the same with it.

The Back Cross Roll is done by changing the balance of the body, to move from one foot to the other, in the same manner as for the back roll. The stroke is from the outside instead of the inside edge of the skate; the edge on which he is skating not being changed, but the right foot, which is off the ice, being crossed at the back of the left, and put down, and the stroke taken at the same moment, from the outside edge of the left skate, at the toe. As in the back roll of both forms, the strokes are but feeble, the skater may, from time to time, renew his impulse as he finds occasion, by commencing anew with the 3.

The large outside backward roll is attained by a run, when the skater, having gained all the impulse he can, strikes on the outside forward of the right leg, turns the 3, and immediately puts down the left on the outside back. He then, without further effort, flies rapidly over the ice; the left arm being raised, the head turned over the right shoulder, and the right foot turned out and pointed.

It must be evident that the elements described may be combined and varied infinitely. Hence waltz and quadrille skating, &c., which may be described as combi-

nations of 3's, outside backwards, &c. These are left to the judgment of the skater, and his skill in the art.

In the North it is common to travel in skates on the gulfs and rivers; and, with a favorable wind, they go faster than vessels. It is a kind of flight, for they only touch the ground in a very slight thin line. As to feats in skating, we are told, that the Frieslander, who is generally a skilful skater, often goes for a long time at the rate of fifteen miles an hour. In 1801, two young women, going thirty miles in two hours, won the prize in a skating race at Groningen. In 1821, a Lincolnshire man, for a wager of 100 guineas, skated one mile within two seconds of three minutes.

DANGERS IN SKATING.

If the chest be irritable, it is neither salutary nor easy to skate against the wind. In countries where these exercises are general, inflammations of the chest are very common in winter. Skating sometimes exposes to much danger. If the skater find that he cannot get away from rotten ice, he must crawl over it on his hands and knees, in order to reduce his weight on the supporting points. If he fall on it at length, he must roll away from it towards ice more firm. If he fall into a hole, he must extend his arms horizontally over the edges of the unbroken ice, till a ladder or a plank is pushed towards him, or a rope is thrown for his hold.

TREATMENT RECOMMENDED IN THE CASE OF DROWNED PERSONS.

CAUTIONS. — 1. Lose no time. 2. Avoid all rough usage. 3. Never hold the body up by the feet. 4 Nor roll the body on casks. 5. Nor rub the body with salt or spirits. 6. Nor inject tobacco-smoke, or infusion of tobacco.

RESTORATIVE MEANS IF APPARENTLY DROWNED. — Send quickly for medical assistance; but do not delay the following means.

I. Convey the body carefully, with the head and shoulders supported to a raised position, to the nearest house.

II. Strip the body, and rub it dry; then wrap it in hot blankets, and place it in a warm bed in a warm chamber.

III. Wipe and cleanse the mouth and nostrils.

IV. In order to restore the natural warmth of the body:

1. Move a heated covered warming-pan over the back and spine.

2. Put bladders or bottles of hot water, or heated bricks, to the pit of the stomach, the arm-pits, between the thighs, and to the soles of the feet.

3. Foment the body with hot flannels; but if possible,

4. Immerse the body in a warm bath, as hot as the hand can bear without pain, as this is preferable to the other means for restoring warmth.

5. Rub the body briskly with the hand; do not, however, suspend the use of the other means at the same time.

V. In order to restore breathing, introduce the pipe of a common bellows (where the apparatus of the Society is not at hand) into one nostril, carefully closing the other and mouth: at the same time draw downwards and push gently backwards the upper part of the windpipe, to allow a more free admission of air: blow the bellows gently in order to inflate lungs, till the breast be a little raised; the mouth and nostrils should then be set free, and a moderate pressure should be made with the hand upon the chest. Repeat this process till life appears.

VI. Electricity should be employed early by a medical assistant.

VII. Inject into the stomach, by means of an elastic tube and syringe, a pint of warm brandy and water, or wine and water.

VIII. Apply sal-volatile or hartshorn to the nostrils.

IF APPARENTLY DEAD FROM INTENSE COLD. — Rub the body with snow, ice, or cold water. Restore warmth by slow degrees; and after some time, if necessary, employ the means recommended for the drowned. In these accidents, it is highly dangerous to apply heat too early.

SKATING CLUBS.

SKATING, while being one of the most delightful sports, is at the same time one of the most dangerous. The object of a skating club is instruction and improvement in the art of Skating, the cultivation of a friendly feeling in all who participate in the amusement, and the efficient use of proper apparatus for the rescue of persons breaking through the ice. Among the most celebrated of these is the "Skater's Club of the City of Philadelphia," who have a regular organization, and whose members number some of the most influential citizens of Philadelphia. The officers consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, and an Executive Committee of five members, all of whom are elected by separate ballots at an annual meeting. The President presides. The Secretary records the proceedings; in his absence the Corresponding Secretary fills his place. The Treasurer collects and receives in trust all moneys payable or donations made, appropriates the same to the payment of the bills of the Club, and keeps regular accounts. The Executive Committee are the business body of the Club; and they keep a diary of all the incidents of the skating season, and all matters they

may deem suitable for preservation, notice, and action, looking to improvement, pleasure, and safety. They also have charge of the apparatus belonging to the Club. Each member is obliged to provide himself with a Badge, Cord, and Reel. The physicians connected with the Club constitute a Board of Surgeons.

Description of the Apparatus used by the Club for Saving Life.

BADGE.

1. The Badge is a small silver Skate, about one inch and a quarter long, and is worn on the left breast of the coat, for the purpose of designating members of the Club when skating.*

CORD AND REEL.

2. The Cord and Reel, carried by each member when skating, is the most simple and important device used by the Club. It consists of a reel about five inches in length, made of hard wood, with a strong cord carefully wrapped thereon, about three-sixteenths of an inch thick, and fifty feet long, with a noose on the end for the wrist. In case of accident, two or three members are sufficient to go to the rescue; and the others should act as a reserved guard

* (To let persons not members of the Club know to whom to apply for Aid.)

to prevent persons from approaching too near the rescuers. The rescuer first securely fastens the cord around his wrist, and then throws his reel to the person in the water, using care not to strike him with it. After the person in the water receives the cord, and secures it around his wrist, the first effort of the rescuer should be to calm him, and instruct him to hold to the cord, and strike out with his feet as if swimming; and when in that position, a gentle pull will bring him safely on the ice.

SAFETY LADDERS.

3. The ladders are constructed lightly, and of light wood, about fifteen feet long, with eyes or rings near the end, having a grass line about half an inch thick and one hundred feet long attached thereto.

SAFETY HOOKS.

4. The hooks are made similar to the ordinary ice hook, without a point, with a pole about fifteen feet in length, to which is attached a line about twenty-five feet long.

SAFETY AXE.

5. The axe is made similar to the ordinary ice-axe, and is of great importance in case of persons getting under the ice.

SAFETY FLOATS.

6. The life floats are made of gum, near the shape of a large life preserver, and have a buoyancy of over seven hundred pounds; they can be thrown to persons in the water, or placed upon any one who is going to the rescue; and in case several persons are in the water at the same time, they will be found very useful.

STATION FLAGS.

7. Station flags are to designate the places on the ice where the apparatus is stationed. The pole is twelve feet high, with steel points, and the flag about six feet by four feet, with the word, "Station," thereon.

SAFETY FLAGS.

8. Safety flags are small flags, the poles about six feet high, and on the flags the word, "*Caution.*" These flag-poles have sharp steel points, and are forced in the ice at all places which are considered dangerous.

SAFETY LINES.

9. These lines are one hundred feet long, made of cotton, and are about half an inch thick, with eyes and spring hooks in the ends, so as to be readily attached to any thing in time of danger.

AIR-HOLE GUARDS.

10. Air-hole guards are constructed of maple posts four feet long and one inch and a half thick, with sharp steel points to pierce the ice. These posts are forced in the ice around the *air-hole*, which is then encircled with a small grass line, about half an inch thick, which passes through a hole near the top of the posts.

BOAT.

11. The Boat is small and light, made of cedar, and is about sixteen feet long, with runners attached thereto.

BLANKETS.

12. A blanket will be found useful to place around persons when taken out of the water; and if the weather is very cold, and the person has to be removed any distance, it might be the means of saving life.

SKATES.

THE great attention given to Skating within the last few years, has caused the market to be flooded with Skates of various designs and patterns. Among them "Norcross' Patent Spring Skate" is an invention which seems to combine all the requisites for a good Skate. Of simple construction and easily adjusted to the foot, it will soon become a general favorite. In fact the makers' orders are far ahead of their ability to fill. If you wish a good Skate, for a Lady, Gentleman, or child, the best assortment to be had will be found at M. L. BRADFORD & Co.'s, 142 Washington St.

Skating Ponds in Boston and Vicinity.

ON BOSTON COMMON.

Frog Pond and Parade Ground.*

PUBLIC GARDEN.

A very large Pond has just been made.

* When overflowed.

AGRICULTURAL FAIR GROUNDS,

Foot of Newton Street.

Dock Square and Canton St., and State St. and Canton St. Omnibus, and Metropolitan Horse R. R. Cars stop here. A small entrance fee is charged.

JAMAICA POND, — *Jamaica Plains.*

Horse Cars leave the Tremont House as often as every half hour for this pond.

WIGHAM POND, — *Dedham.*

Steam Cars from the Providence R. R. Depot, leave about once an hour. This pond is renowned for the very clear ice to be found.

FRESH POND, — *Cambridge.*

By the Horse Cars from Bowdoin Square, every 15 minutes.

SPY POND, — *West Cambridge.*

Cars leave Bowdoin Square every hour.

SKATES.

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